IN THE CLAIMS

Applicant hereby presents the claims, their status in the application, and amendments thereto as indicated:

1.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A storage device comprising:

a processor;

a computer interface communicably connected to the processor, the computer interface being adapted to enable the processor to communicate with a computer as a direct attached storage peripheral;

a network interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a file server, wherein the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file server; and

a storage means communicably connected to the processor, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, wherein upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the boot file from the file server if the boot file is not cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

12. (Previously Presented) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the computer is communicably connected to a network server through the network interface.

13. (Previously Presented) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

14. (Previously Presented) A computer network comprising

a file server;

a network server;

a computer communicably connected to the network server;

a storage device communicably connected to the computer and the file server, the storage device being in communication with the computer as a direct attached storage peripheral and comprising a processor and a storage means, wherein

the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file server;

the processor is adapted to have read and write access to the storage means; and

upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the boot file from the file server if the boot file is not cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the

computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

15. (Previously Presented) The computer network of claim 14, wherein the computer is communicably connected to the network server through the storage device.

16. (Cancelled)